

Community Services Committee – 3 September 2002

Minutes of the meeting of **Community Services Committee** held on **3 September 2002** when there were present:

Cllr R A Amner (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs R Brown
Cllr K A Gibbs
Cllr T E Goodwin
Cllr Mrs L Hungate
Cllr C C Langlands
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley

Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr J M Pullen
Cllr P K Savill
Cllr Mrs M S Vince
Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

OFFICERS PRESENT

G Woolhouse	Head of Housing, Health & Community Care
D Timson	Property Maintenance & Highways Manager
Mrs H Drye	Corporate Policy Manager
Mrs M Martin	Committee Administrator

389 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 July 2002 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

390 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mrs R Brown declared a personal interest in items 10 and 11 by virtue of being a Hullbridge Parish Councillor.

Cllr J R F Mason declared a personal interest in item 9 by virtue of being a Member of Southend & District Community Health Council.

Cllr Mrs M A Weir declared a personal interest in item 10 by virtue of being a Hawkwell Parish Councillor.

Cllrs T E Goodwin and Mrs B J Wilkins declared a personal interest in item 10 by virtue of being Great Wakering Parish Councillors.

Cllrs Mrs M J Webster, J M Pullen and Mrs J R Lumley declared a personal interest in item 10 by virtue of being Rayleigh Town Councillors.

391 LOCAL GOVERNMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OF HEALTH IN ESSEX

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care which outlined the arrangements that are being put in place in Essex to implement a new local authority overview and scrutiny function in respect of health services.

Members noted that:-

- as part of the extensive reforms taking place in the NHS, the Health and Social Care Act 2001 gives statutory powers to Overview and Scrutiny Committees within authorities that also hold responsibility for social services. This can include

- referring contested proposals for major service changes to the Secretary of State.
- Essex County Council had considered how it could involve district and borough councils in implementing health overview and scrutiny in Essex. The situation is more complex in Essex with a mixture of County, Unitary, District and Borough Councils. An agreed set of principles for NHS scrutiny had been appended to the report.
 - A structure had been agreed to include NHS Overview and Scrutiny Committees within those authorities with social services responsibilities, a Partnership Forum and Overview and Scrutiny Panels. A diagram illustrating the working arrangements had been appended to the report.
 - It had been agreed at the consultative meetings that there should be a geographic spread of both District and County Members on the Essex Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The current appointments will exist for one year, but it was noted that in future there should be a district Member representing the South of the County, which could rotate between Basildon, Castle Point and Rochford.
 - There would be one Member and one Officer representative on the Partnership Forum representing all the Districts/Boroughs.
 - A series of guidelines had been developed for appointment of Members to the Overview & Scrutiny Panels.
 - A pilot study was being undertaken prior to the formal implementation of these arrangements in January 2003.

Members were in agreement that this is an exciting new development which will enable local authorities to participate more fully in seeking to improve standards within the health service. However, they were concerned that there is currently no District Member representing South Essex and on a Motion moved by Cllr J R F Mason and seconded by Cllr Mrs M S Vince it was recommended that County Councillor R A Pearson, currently representing the area on the County's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, ought to be invited to this Council's Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee when it is considering NHS Overview and Scrutiny, in order that he might take the views of the District forward to the County Council.

Recommended to the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee

That the County Councillor representative for this area on the County's Overview & Scrutiny Committee be invited to all relevant meetings of this Council's Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee when it considers NHS Overview and Scrutiny. (HHHCC)

Resolved

That £1500 for NHS Overview and Scrutiny be included in the draft 2002/3 Revenue Estimates. (HFS)

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which provided Members with a recommendation for those playspaces which might be refurbished in the current financial year as part of the ongoing programme.

Members noted that:-

- The rolling programme had previously been based on a complete survey of playspaces which had been carried out in 1996/97.
- Works had been completed on six sites; many of these schemes had been carried out in conjunction with the Parish Councils, who had taken an active part in the consultation process.
- As has been customary in the past, the Parish Councils would be offered the opportunity to take on the responsibility of the relevant playspaces.
- Playspaces can provide facilities for children up to 15 years old depending on the type of equipment.
- Some playspaces provide equipment covering more than one age range. Signage exists at individual sites detailing the recommended age.
- Statements made confirming whether a playspace is well used is based on anecdotal information; it would be unrealistic to do a physical count.
- In excess of 4,500 children had attended the various activities which had been provided across the District during the school summer holidays this year and congratulated officers on the success of these ventures.
- There is an inventory detailing all play equipment.

Resolved

- (1) That Hawkwell Common and Hockley Woods playspaces be identified as the first two priorities in the current year's rolling programme.
- (2) That, should sufficient funding remain from the first two priorities, High Street, Great Wakering be identified as a third scheme.
- (3) That, following refurbishment, Officers seek Parish Council views on taking on the transfer of playspaces to the Parish Councils. (CD(F&ES))

393 PETITION – INFANT FACILITIES - PLAYSPLACE, POOLES LANE, HULLBRIDGE

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which invited Members to agree a response to a petition which had been received regarding a lack of infant/toddler equipment in the Pooles Lane playspace.

Members noted that an initial response had been sent to both the Parish Council and the person who had presented the petition.

Members and officers were in general agreement with the petitioners in respect of the shortage of infant/toddler equipment and had agreed to two new pieces of equipment. The Parish Council could be invited to consider purchasing these, which would then be maintained by the District Council.

Resolved

That the Parish be invited to consider purchasing two additional items of toddler equipment for the Pooles Lane, Hullbridge playspace, to be maintained by the District Council. (CD(F&ES))

394 THAMES GATEWAY SOUTH ESSEX – COMMUNITY AND HEALTH PROJECT PROPOSALS

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive which identified potential Community and Health projects for the District. Members noted that these projects had not been costed, they were indicative of the type of project that could be achieved in the area, should funding be available. They are based on themes identified by Thames Gateway South Essex, and are similar in nature to others proposed by authorities in the partnership.

During discussion, the following additional comments/suggestions were noted:-

- A domestic violence refuge should be considered.
- Breakfast clubs are being provided by the Schools' Development Fund
- Industrial museum, Cherry Orchard Jubilee Park.
- Art trail.
- Indoor bowls.
- Youth cafés need not be limited to Hullbridge and Great Wakering.
- "Walking the Way to Health" scheme could include shorter, escorted walks.
- Live music week – a small bandstand could be sited at the Rochford Reservoir site.
- Following a survey which is currently being undertaken of football pitches, there may be a need for additional provision.
- Use of the former Bungalow and Albert Jones Court buildings should continue to be investigated for projects such as a library or youth facility.
- Security should be added to the Councils leisure and playspace facilities
- Shared ownership of housing for young people.

Resolved

That the list of Community and Health Projects, as attached to the signed copy of these Minutes, be agreed for inclusion in the Thames Gateway South Essex framework document. (CEX)

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The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

Chairman

Date